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Finance Committee Minutes 11-03-2003

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM, COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING

11/3/03

ATTENDEES:

DeCoursey*	Feinleib	O'Riordan	O'Neill	Mahoney
Tosti*	Connors*	Simmons*	Morrissette*	
Piandes*	Foskett	Deyst*	Ronan*	
DuBois*	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
	Howard*	Fanning*		Kneeland*

*Indicates present

VISITORS: School Committee Members Jeff Thielman, Sue Sheffler; Gordon Jamieson, Leslie Orainger, Paul Bayer

WEBSITE: Jones provided a hard copy of the home page and stated that the site is functional but largely empty. The purpose of the website is to inform the public about FinCom operations. After some discussion, the committee decided by consensus that website contents would be approved by the entire committee before posting. Posting of the Town Day handouts was approved. Jones will maintain a FinCom calendar. He will also invite email to the site which he will forward to the appropriate subcommittee. DuBois, Howard, and Jones will edit the home page content.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN: Franclemont provided a memo and discussed a proposed 6 part plan to inform the community about the FinCom and its recommendations. Members were generally supportive of all suggestions which included, in addition to the website, an improved Town Day booth and a presentation to Town Meeting members and other interested groups. The chair suggested as a goal to meet w/ 2 groups by 1/15/04. He asked all members to forward content ideas to Franclemont & Jones.

ASSOCIATION OF FINANCE COMMITTEES ANNUAL MEETING: Arlington was represented by 6 members. Tosti provided a brief review. According to the lunch time speaker, Michael Widmer, the State "structural" deficit for FY05 will be about \$1.5b. He predicts smaller local aid reductions than last year.

SCHOOLS: Education SubCom (Fanning) reported that redistricting is being discussed. Tosti & Foskett were asked to a well-attended meeting on this subject.

BUDGET PROJECTION: Tosti provided copies of Galkowski's projections for FY05 & 06 prepared for the recent BOS budget discussion. It projects a \$3m deficit for FY05. In hopes of avoiding last year's delays, Tosti will write a letter to the appointing authorities requesting budgets by Wed 1/7/04.

SYMMES: DeCoursey reported that RFP responses are due 12/10. The ARB expects to select the contractor in mid-Jan.

MINUTEMAN: DeCoursey reported that wealthier towns are unhappy with assessing by Ed Reform rather than the original agreement. This topic will again be discussed by the Minuteman school committee. The Superintendent defended the Ed Reform approach. The school has increased out-of-district enrollment. No Choice students remain.

BUDGET REVIEW GUIDELINES: Tosti provided copies of a guideline sheet he has provided in the past. He requested members who have suggestions to mark it up & FAX to him.

RESERVES: Tosti provided a table showing what is now being used and what is available. Free cash is higher than www.arlingtonma.gov/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_BComm/FinComm/ArlingtonMA_FinComm/2003/S002FF434?textPage=1

expected because both because the hiring freeze reduced unemployment payments below what had been estimated and because new growth revenue exceeded expectations. Jamieson pointed out that the chart is not self-explanatory which may partly explain why the BOS is confused. Tosti also provided copies of a draft memo from Foskett concerning a policy for handling reserves. He asked everyone to study it.

TOWN MANAGER SEARCH: DeCoursey believes that the number of applications has increased somewhat since the Town Meeting vote to change the residency requirement. He reviewed the planned selection process. The advisory committee will screen applications on 11/19. The BOS hopes to have a new manager in place by 2/1/04.

USER FEES: Olsen says he has most of the data in hand. It appears that most Recreation programs are self-supporting. He plans a report in December. Thielman & Scheffler commented that the School Committee is considering charging fees that would cause each sport to be self supporting. The athletic budget is \$340k and only partly offset by current fees.

COMMITTEE: Vacancies exist in Pcts 1 and 20. Nominations needed soon Tosti would like to appoint new members in December before the budget review begins.

Next mtg Monday 12/1/03.

For more info go to <http://www.arlingtonfincom.com/>

RESERVE FUND BALANCE \$400,000

cc Selectmen	Peter B Howard	
FinCom Members	Library file	Secretary 11/09/03
Acting Town Manager	Town Web Site	